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**PRESS RELEASE  
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## ***Grill Safely This Summer!***

Between 2003-2006, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 7,900 fires involving grills, hibachis or barbeques *per year*. Each year, these fires caused an average of 10 civilian deaths, 120 reported injuries, and \$80 million in property damage. Most of these fires involved gas grills (81%); 16% used charcoal or other solid fuel.

The leading factor contributing to gas grill fires were leaks or breaks in the equipment. The main factor in the charcoal grill fires was having something that could burn too close to the grill. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states that in 2007, 18,600 patients went to emergency rooms with injuries involving grills.

"We know that the number of grill fires goes up between May and July, when people are spending more time outdoors. But with just a little common sense, these injuries and losses are easily prevented," said West Virginia State Fire Marshal Sterling Lewis, Jr. "Have a basic routine for maintenance and inspection of your grill equipment—it will keep you, your family and your property safe."

***Here are a few tips that can keep you and your family safe this summer:***

- Keep your grill at least 10 ft. away from your house or other structures. A flaming fire can quickly spread out of control. Thirty-three percent of home grill structure fires start on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch.
- Never use a grill underneath a roof, awning or other structure, as well as overhanging branches.

- Never use propane or charcoal-fueled grills of any kind anywhere but outdoors not only to avoid a fire hazard, but to avoid build-up of carbon monoxide in enclosed spaces.
- Before using your grill for the first time this season, visually inspect the grill itself, as well as smaller parts, to make sure it's free of animal or bird nests, insects, dried leaves, etc.
- Also, check the gas tank hose for any leaks or breaks. Spray light soapy water on the hose and around fixtures. If there's a gas leak, it will bubble.
- If there's a gas leak and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get your grill serviced before using it again. If the leak doesn't stop, call the fire department!
- If you smell gas while cooking, get away from the grill immediately. Call the fire department—but NEVER try to move the grill.
- Attend your grill at all times—and keep children and pets away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill free of grease or fat buildup.
- Keep charcoal fluid away from children and away from heat sources.
- If you use starter fluid, use ONLY charcoal starter fluid. NEVER add the fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- If you use an electric charcoal starter, make sure you're using an extension cord rated for outdoor use.
- If using a charcoal grill, make sure the coals have cooled COMPLETELY before you dispose of them. Use a metal container only.

***The West Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office wishes everyone a safe and happy summer season!***

For more information on summer safety, visit the following websites:

[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)

[www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov)

[www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org)

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